

REMARKS

Claims 1-3, 5-7, 9-15, 18-19, and 25 are pending in the above-identified application, and were rejected. With this Amendment, claims 1, 15, and 25 were amended. Accordingly, claims 1-3, 5-7, 9-15, 18-19, and 25 remain at issue.

I. 35 U.S.C. § 103 Obviousness Rejection of Claims

Claim 1-3, 5-7, 9-15, 18-19, and 25 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Shishido et al.* (U.S. Patent 5,869,782) and *Ware et al.* (U.S. Patent No. 5,537,573). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Although Applicants do not agree with the rejection, to further prosecution, Applicants have amended independent claims 1, 15, and 25 to further clarify Applicants' invention. In particular, with respect to independent claim 1 as amended, Applicants claim a digital signal processing method for reproducing digital signals comprising the steps of storing a data block to be used repeatedly at least twice out of a plurality of data blocks obtained at least by dividing a digital signal on a time base, where the data block is stored separately from said remaining data blocks; receiving information indicating the period of time during which the data block is retained, wherein the period of time is related to each use of the data block; and deleting the data block based on the information.

The Examiner asserts that *Shishido* teaches the claim 1 limitation of "storing a data block to be used repeatedly at least twice out of a plurality of data blocks obtained at least by dividing a digital signal on a time base" because "*Shishido* discloses a method of MIDI file compression, wherein a block obtained by dividing a signal on a time base to be used repeatedly within a file is

stored only once in the compressed file along with information to retrieve the original file.” *See* Office Action, at pg 2. Moreover, in addressing Applicants’ prior arguments, the Examiner asserts that the “musical data storage medium (13)” disclosed by *Shishido* satisfies the required “storing” limitation of claim 1.

Applicants respectfully disagree and submit that the Examiner is mischaracterizing this claim 1 limitation. Applicants have amended claim 1 to emphasize that (in the claimed method for reproducing digital signals) “the data block to be used repeatedly at least twice” is stored separately from the “remaining data blocks.” *Shishido* discloses “a compressed file storage medium 11 for recording a compressed file (in which a musical data file is [stored in a] compressed [MIDI type format] by [a] pattern matching method.” (*See Shishido*, Col. 9 lines 41-51, Fig. 10). Assuming *arguendo* that the compressed file stored in *Shishido*’s compressed file storage medium 11 stores blocks of data to be used repeatedly when the file is reproduced, *Shishido* does not teach separately storing any block to be used repeatedly from the remaining blocks in the compressed file as required by claim 1. Instead, in contrast to Applicant’s invention, in the reproducing apparatus disclosed in Fig. 10 of *Shishido*, all blocks of the compressed file are initially stored together in the compressed file storage medium and, when decoded by decoder 12, all musical data blocks are stored temporarily together in the musical data storage medium 13. Applicants submit that, by storing all the decoded data blocks temporarily together, *Shishido* teaches away from digital signal reproducing efficiencies of Applicants’ claimed invention where only decoded data blocks that are used repeatedly at least twice (e.g., music “refrain”) are stored or retained temporarily. (e.g., *See Application*, at pg. 17 lines 13-20).

Thus, *Shishido* fails to disclose or suggest (alone or in combination with other cited references) the claim 1 limitation for reproducing digital signals that requires “storing a data block to be used repeatedly at least twice out of a plurality of data blocks obtained at least by dividing a digital signal on a time base, [where] said data block [is] stored separately from said remaining data blocks.”

The Examiner agrees that *Shishido* does not teach the claim 1 requirements of “receiving information indicating the period of time during which said data block is retained, wherein the period of time is related to each use of said data block; and deleting said data block based on said information,...” but maintains that *Ware* teaches this missing feature. *Ware* discloses a cache system where the lines of the cache can be deleted after a predetermined amount of time or after a predetermined number of accesses of lines of the cache pre-fetched from memory based on the prior execution history of the processor. (See Col. 2, lines 46-58; Col. 7, lines 2-5.) Thus, the predetermined amount of time in *Ware* is not related to the use of the separately stored data block that is to be used repeatedly at least twice out of a plurality of data blocks obtained at least by dividing a digital signal on a time base as required by claim 1. Thus, neither *Shishido* nor *Ware* teaches or suggests receiving information indicating the period of time during which the data block is retained, where the period of time is related to each use of the data block, as required by claim 1.

Therefore, for at least the reasons provided above, it would not have been obvious for one of ordinary skill in the art to combine the teachings of *Shishido* and *Ware* to derive claim 1, or claims 2-3, 5-7, 9-14 that depend from claim 1.

Independent claims 15 and 25 as amended include similar limitations to claim 1, and claims 18-19 depend from claim 15. Thus, claims 15, 18-19 and 25 should be deemed allowable over *Shishido* and *Ware* for at least the same reasons as provided for claim 1. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of this rejection.

II. Conclusion

In view of the above amendments and remarks, Applicants submit that claims 1-3, 5-7, 9-15, 18-19, and 25 are clearly allowable over the cited prior art, and respectfully request early and favorable notification to that effect.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required to Account No. 19-3140.

Respectfully submitted,

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